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Human rights abusers push Cambridge resolution vs. Israel

Credit: The Associated Press

FILE - In this Sept. 20. 2010 file photo, the corporate logo for Hewlett-Packard Co. is displayed at an HP Innovation Summit, in New York. (AP Photo/Mark Lennihan, File)

There was a time when demonstrating one's hypocrisy was considered a liability, or at least something worth avoiding. That time has passed, as the members of the Cambridge City Council seem poised to illustrate.

On April 23, the Council is expected to adopt a resolution calling for a boycott of Hewlett-Packard, offered by groups retaliating against the company for doing business in Israel. The resolution is orchestrated by the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement, funded by and comprised of the usual types who, wishing ardently for Israel to disappear, use the language of human rights to attempt to delegitimize her. They do this, of course, at the behest of some of the worst human rights abusers in the world.

The expected vote is accompanied by no shortage of irony. While professing to be exemplars of open, transparent democracy, council members have conferred in secret with BDS groups to develop the anti-Israel resolution, refusing to make it public so that those who take issue with it — and the public at large — could have the time to respond. It is much better, they calculate, to keep it secret until just before the vote, minimizing the public's opportunity to scrutinize it, and to ask questions about how it came to be conceived, and by whom.

The City Council's imminent invocation of human rights against Israel is especially rich. Just seven months ago it declared an official relationship with Dongguan, China, a notorious center of labor rights violations in a country that is a human rights violator on a massive scale.

The hand that Israel has been dealt is encirclement by some of the most depraved enterprises on the planet, each committed to its annihilation, each willing to use the lethal means at its disposal to bring that annihilation about.

There's Hamas, just yards from Israeli civilians, which has already fired 15,000 rockets into Israel and which has built underground tunnels into Israel to facilitate the massacre of its people. There's Hezbollah to the north, whose 100,000 rockets are positioned on command to hit every Israeli neighborhood.

There's Syria's Bashar Assad, who has slaughtered several hundred thousand innocents and whose chemical weapons sit kilometers from where Israelis live. There's ISIS and al-Qaeda, operating just outside Israel's borders. And there's Iran, funding Hamas and Hezbollah, launching explosive-packed drones into Israeli airspace — and which is months away from deploying nuclear weapons when it sees fit, threatening to use them to remove Israel from the map.

The Cambridge City Council, bless its soul, has not seen fit to take up a resolution condemning any of them. No, it is the Jewish state alone that interests it, and not in a good way, for reasons best left to psychologists to analyze.

The threats that Israel has to try to cope with 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, are dangerous ones. They are complex. They are serious. And they are difficult. Israel's neighborhood bears little resemblance to the comfortable communities of Chevy Chase, Md., or Manhattan's Upper West Side — or Harvard Square. One cannot help observing that the challenges facing Israeli families and the government elected to protect them exceed even those faced by Cambridge.

Not every Israeli 19- or 20-year-old serving in her country's armed forces in order to protect it is perfect. Not every decision made by Israel's government — the product of a robust and real democracy matched nowhere in the Middle East and few places anywhere else — is one that everyone agrees is the right one.

But surely the Cambridge City Council can — if it wants to — resist the over-the-top haters who constitute the BDS movement and who want to take the council for a ride. Or, its members can permit themselves to be snookered, and in the process dishonor both the council and the citizens it was elected to serve.

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